BOOK IV

MAHALAKSHMI TEMPLE TRUST SERIES

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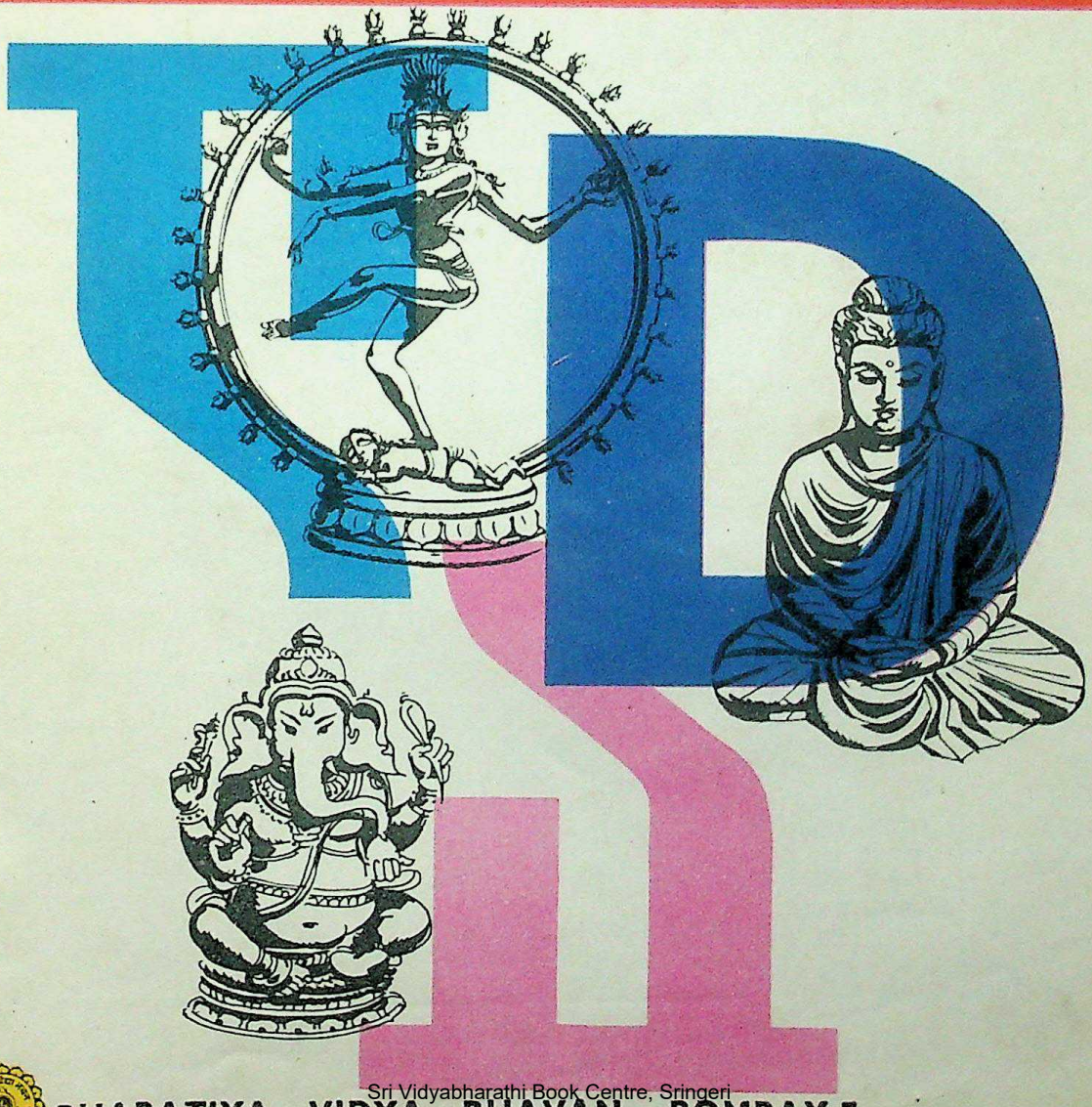
culture course



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BHARATIYA VIDYA BHAVAN, BOMBAY-7

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MAHALAKSHMI TEMPLE TRUST SERIES

CULTURE COURSE

BOOK 4

FOR STANDARD IV

By

S. RAMAKRISHNAN

V. A. K. AYER

BHARATIYA VIDYA BHAVAN

BOMBAY

AHMEDABAD * BANGALORE * BARODA * BHOPAL * BHUBANESWAR * CALCUTTA
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PREFACE

We are familiar with the character-moulding impact of grandmother's tales, on impressionable minds. Through the ages, it has been the privilege of the elders of the family to convey to children, through bed-time stories, a broad conception of the fundamental values of life.

Even today, particularly in rural households, children drop off to sleep lulled by lofty lullabies and stories and legends of the wisdom and the prowess of our ancestors narrated by elders.

Things are different today. With the growing disruption and dislocation of the family setting, and the increasing urbanization, when winning the bread and keeping the hearth have become the foremost preoccupation of a hurly-burly life, young people are deprived of this nourishing food for the soul.

Young hearts and minds not yet warped by the harsher realities of life and the deadening climate of an age characterized by a technological avalanche and a soulless materialism, have to be provided with right mental and spiritual food and nourishment from infancy. They should be enabled to gradually learn, appreciate and absorb our tradition, history and culture.

The late Kulapati Munshiji felt that the first concrete step in this direction would be to prepare a series of graded Culture Course Text Books for Standards I to XI, suited to the calibre and assimilative capacity of different age-groups among our children.

A munificent donation of Rs. 1 lakh from the Mahalakshmi Temple Trust, Bombay, through Shri J. M. Barot, its Managing Trustee, enabled the Bhavan to translate this long-cherished dream of Kulapatiji into a reality. Kulapatiji, in grateful recognition of this donation had offered to name the Scheme "Mahalakshmi Temple Trust Series."

In 1969, Kulapatiji appointed a Special Committee with Shri S. Ramakrishnan as Chairman and Dr. Shalini Amonkar and Shri V. A. K. Ayer as Convenors to prepare comprehensive syllabi.

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The syllabi drawn up by the Committee were submitted to many eminent spiritual leaders, men of letters, educationists, and other scholars for guidance and suggestions. Those who blessed the scheme, scrutinised the syllabi, and helped us with their valuable suggestions, include the late Sri Rajaji and Sri Sri Prakasa, Acharya Vinoba Bhave, Jagadguru Sankaracharya of Kanchi, Jagadguru Sankaracharya of Sringeri, Swami Ranganathananda, Swami Chinmayananda, Sri-La-Sri Pandrimalai Swamigal, Dr. G. S. Pathak, Dr. A. L. Mudaliar, Dr. C. D. Deshmukh, Dr. D. V. Gundappa, Dr Karan Singh, Dr. D. C. Pavate, Dr. V. K. Gokak and Dr. K. R. S. Iyengar. The Bhavan is beholden to them all.

The texts for different Standards had the benefit of having been actually tried out by teachers in the Bhavan's Schools in different parts of the country.

These graded Culture Course Text Books are the Bhavan's humble offering to the nation in the vital task of inculcating in our youth a passionate love for and an awareness of the amazing unity and continuity of the tradition, history and culture of our Motherland, and make them exclaim with joy: "We are all children of Mother India! India is One and Indivisible! What a great nation! What a wonderful heritage!"

I am grateful to the numerous fellow-workers who encouraged the Bhavan in this mission with their valuable advice and help. While they are too numerous to be individually mentioned, I would, however, like to particularly record our sense of gratitude to Kulapati S. Balakrishna Joshi, Prof. M. A. Mazumdar, Principal K. S. Talpade, Principal L. A. Vyas, Prof. P. Sankaranarayanan, Prof. B. R. Kulkarni and Prof. R. A. Kashyap who have made useful contribution to the successful implementation of this scheme.

DHARAMSEY M. KHATAU
President.

BHARATIYA VIDYA BHAVAN
Bombay
January 1, 1974.

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Prayer

Sarva Mangala Mangalye
Shive Sarvartha Sadhike
Sharanye Triyambike Devi
Narayani Namostu te

Saha navavatu	May God protect us together !
Saha nau bhunaktu	May He be pleased with us !
Saha veeryam karavavahai	May we work together !
Tejasvinavadhitamastu	May our studies illumine us !

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Lesson 2

The Golden Deer

Rama, Sita and Lakshmana lived in the Dandaka forest. One day a beautiful deer with golden skin came that way and started grazing near their *ashrama*.

Diamonds and other gems appeared to shine from its body.

Sita, who saw it, was charmed by it. She wanted to have it as a pet in the *ashrama*.

So she called out to Rama, "My Lord, here is a beautiful deer; come and have a look at it."

Rama and Lakshmana saw it. Rama too was charmed by it. Lakshmana, however, felt that it was not a real deer. He said, "This appears to be the magic of some Rakshasa."

Sita said, "No, it is not." Then she turned to Rama. "Please catch it!" she pleaded. "I want to keep it as a pet. If you cannot catch it alive, at least get me its beautiful skin."

Rama wanted to please Sita. He took his bow and arrow. He assured her, "Sita, I shall catch it alive, or I shall kill it, and give you its beautiful skin."

Before leaving, he called Lakshmana and told him, "Lakshmana, don't leave Sita alone. It may take some time before I return with the deer."

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Rama started chasing the deer. It ran here and there. Sometimes it just disappeared. Thus it drew Rama a long way from the *ashrama*.

At last Rama aimed an arrow at the deer, and shot it.

Unable to bear the pain, the deer called out in Rama's voice, "Ah, Lakshmana! Ah, Sita!" and died.

This deer was really a Rakshasa whose name was Mareecha. He was the uncle of the Rakshasa King, Ravana.

On hearing the appeal for help from Rama, Sita thought that Rama was in danger. So she asked Lakshmana to run to Rama's rescue.

But Lakshmana tried to set her fears at rest. "Rama can never be in danger. The cry may be a trick to lure me from here. So please do not worry," said Lakshmana.

But Sita would not accept this. She cried. She even scolded Lakshmana. She also accused him of disloyalty. So Lakshmana unwillingly went off in the direction of the voice, leaving Sita alone.

Ravana, who was hiding near, entered the *ashrama* at once, and carried Sita away to Lanka.

MEANINGS

1. *assured*—told positively.
2. *accused*—brought a charge against.
3. *lure*—take away by a trick.
4. *disloyalty*—unfaithfulness.

EXERCISE

Questions :

1. What did Sita see one day in the forest?
2. What made her like it?
3. How did Lakshmana feel about the deer?
4. What happened when Rama chased it?
5. What happened when Rama shot an arrow at it?
6. Was it a real deer? Who was it?

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The Pandavas and Durvasa

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Lesson 3

The Pandavas lived for fourteen years in the forest. They had been driven out of the country by the Kauravas.

The Pandavas, Mother Kunti and Draupadi had all eaten their meal, and washed the vessels too, when one day *Rishi* Durvasa and a number of his pupils came to the *ashrama*. The Pandavas received them with all honour. The *rishi* said, "We are all very hungry. Please keep some food ready for us. We shall return soon after we have had a bath in the river and said our prayers."

Rishi Durvasa was known and feared for his anger. He would curse people at the slightest displeasure.

The Pandavas were in a fix. They had no food left. The *Akshaya Paatra* had just been emptied. If they did not feed the *rishi* and his pupils, he would curse them all.

God Surya had presented the *Akshaya Paatra* to Yudhishthira. It was a vessel that could produce any quantity of food but just once a day. After it was washed, it would not yield any more food until the following day. Draupadi worried helplessly in the kitchen. She did not know what to do.

When in difficulty, we pray to God. God Krishna was the best friend of the Pandavas. So Draupadi prayed to God Krishna. "O Krishna! Help us to feed the *rishi* and his disciples."

Lord Krishna heard her prayer in Dwaraka. He at once appeared before her. But he first asked, "Draupadi, won't you give me something to eat? I am very hungry."

Draupadi was taken aback. She answered, "Krishna, I prayed to you to help me feed the *rishi*. Now you want food yourself! You know very well we have not even a particle left. The *Akshaya Paatra* won't work any more today. Please do not tease me!"

Krishna said, "Bring the *Akshaya Paatra*," and Draupadi brought it. Krishna searched the vessel. He found one particle of food left in the vessel.

At this Draupadi felt ashamed that she had not even cleaned the vessel properly. Lord Krishna ate the particle of food saying "Hari!"

He then said to Draupadi, "Now, send word to the *rishi* that food is ready!"

"What do you mean?" asked Draupadi.

"Do as I ask you to do, and send Bhima to fetch the *rishi*," said Krishna.

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Puzzled, Bhima went to call the *rishi*.

When, however, Bhima met the *rishi*, the *rishi* said, "Our stomachs are so full that we cannot eat even a particle. Please tell Yudhishthira so, and ask him to excuse us."

God Krishna, by eating the particle, had satisfied the hunger of the *rishi* and his pupils!

God is in everyone of us.

MEANINGS

1. *tease*—irritate playfully.
2. *puzzled*—confused.

EXERCISE

Questions :

1. Who came to the Pandavas in the forest one day?
2. What did he ask?
3. Why were the Pandavas worried?
4. What do you know about the *Akshaya Paatra*?
5. What did Draupadi to?

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Lesson 4

Markandeya

Mrikandu was a great *rishi*. Marudvati was his wife. For a long time they had no children.

The *rishi* prayed to God Siva. God Siva appeared to him, and said, "I am pleased with you, Mrikandu. Tell me, do you want a hundred sons, who will live for a long time, but will all be foolish? Or, do you want one very intelligent son, who will live for only sixteen years?"

The *rishi* at once said, "God, give me that one intelligent son."

God Siva said, "Good! You shall have him."

Soon the *rishi* got a son. He named him Markandeya. The boy grew to be very intelligent and handsome. The *rishi* invested him with the sacred thread. Markandeya learnt the *Vedas* and *Sastras* easily. Everyone liked him.

As the boy was getting on to be sixteen, *Rishi* Mrikandu became sadder and sadder. One day Markandeya asked his father: "Father, why do you look so sad?"

The *rishi* said, "Son! What shall I say? When God Siva gave you to me, he said you would live only sixteen years. You are now about to reach that age. How can I and your mother bear to lose you as we will at the end of this year?"

Markandeya said, "Father! Is that the reason? God Siva is very kind to His devotees. You yourself told me that. He has saved many from death before. I have read about it in the *Puranas*. I shall therefore worship God Siva day and night from today. I am sure, He will save me too!"

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Rishi Mrikandu was very happy to hear his son say this. He blessed his son.

Markandeya built a Siva-Linga at a spot on the sea-shore. He started worshipping God Siva morning, noon and night. He sang bhajans, and often danced in joy.

On the last day, Markandeya was about to sing bhajans, when Yama, the God of Death, came to him. Yama rode on a buffalo. He held a noose in his hand. He spoke to Markandeya, "Stop your bhajan! you boy! Your life in this world is over. Be ready to die."

Markandeya was not afraid. He clung to the Siva-Linga as one clings to one's mother.

Yama threw his noose round the boy's neck, and pulled him along with the Siva-Linga.

Then the Siva-Linga burst open and God Siva came out of it. God kicked Yama in the chest, and said, "Yama, begone! Don't touch this boy. He is my beloved devotee. He will live for ever!"

Yama went away crest-fallen. Markandeya then prayed to God Siva more fervently than ever. This prayer says at the end of each line, "What can Death do to me?" Many people recite this prayer even now.

Markandeya came home, and fell at the feet of his parents. They embraced him, and wept with joy.

Markandeya became a great *rishi*, and lived very long.

MEANINGS

1. *noose*—a loop with running knot.
2. *crest-fallen*—dejected.
3. *fervently*—with great devotion.
4. *recite*—say.
5. *embraced*—hugged.

EXERCISE

Questions :

1. Who was Markandeya?
2. What had God said about Markandeya?
3. What did Markandeya do on hearing about his fate?
4. What happened to him at the completion of his sixteenth year?

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Lesson 5

Arundhati

Kardama was the son of God Brahma.

He married Devahuti.

They had nine daughters. Arundhati was the eighth among them.

She was also called Akshamala.

Rishi Vasishtha married her.

Arundhati was a model wife. She loved and served her husband Vasishtha with all her heart.

She never quarrelled with him.

Once the seven great *rishis*, Kashyapa, Atri, Bharadwaja, Vishwamitra, Gautama, Jamadagni and Vasishtha, went to the Himalayas to bring fruit and rice.

They left Arundhati alone in the forest.

In the meantime a great famine occurred.

So the *rishis* built an *ashrama* in the Himalayas and stayed there.

For twelve years the famine continued. The *rishis* too stayed on in the Himalayas all those twelve years.

Down below in the country Arundhati had nothing to eat. She therefore started doing *tapas* herself.

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God Siva wanted to test her. He came to her dressed like

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an old Brahmin. He said to her, "O lady, I am hungry. Give me something to eat."

Arundhati said, "O Brahmin, I have no rice left. Please eat these *badari* seeds."

God Siva said, "Will you cook these for me?"

Arundhati started a fire. While frying the seeds in it, she told the Brahmin stories and talked of *dharma*.

She continued to talk for twelve long years. She neither ate nor slept, but went on explaining *dharma*.

At the end of twelve years, the famine was over. The *rishis* also returned from the Himalayas. They brought fruit and rice to eat.

God Siva was pleased with Arundhati's *tapas*.

So He took his real form and said to the *rishis*, "Arundhati's *tapas* is greater than yours on the Himalayas!" God Siva made the place very holy where Arundhati lived.

You know, *rishi* Vasishtha sits in the sky as a star. Arundhati also sits there by his side.

Arundhati is the patron deity of marriage.

Newly-married girls see the star Arundhati. They want to love their husbands, and live like her.

Arundhati is one of our great women. We must always remember her.

MEANINGS

1. *famine*—extreme general condition of food being not available.
2. *patron deity*—god or goddess who is a protector.

EXERCISE

Questions :

1. Who was Arundhati?
2. Whom did she marry?
3. Where did the *rishis* go? Why?
4. When famine came, what did Arundhati do?
5. Who came to Arundhati? What did he want?

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Lesson 6

Sukanya

Sukanya was King Saryati's daughter. She was not only beautiful, but clever and happy-go-lucky. She was the King's favourite child.

Not far from the capital city was a grove. There *Rishi* Chyavana lived. Chyavana was the son of *Rishi* Bhrugu.

He was ugly even as a child. He, however, learnt the Vedas so well that everyone respected him.

Chyavana did *tapas* in that grove. He lived in it for a number of years. A big ant-hill grew around his body. Only his eyes could be seen through two holes.

One day King Saryati and his ministers went to this grove. Sukanya too went with them.

Leaving others, young Sukanya played about in the grove. Deep in the grove, she saw the ant-hill. She went near it. She saw the two holes. Out of curiosity she peeped into them. She saw something like glow-worms inside. She picked a long thorn and thrust it into those holes. At once she heard a cry of pain. Shocked as she was, she ran to her father's side.

Very soon, however, the King and all his party got a severe pain in the stomach. They could not bear it. They could not walk or sit or even stand! The King at once knew what might have happened.

He asked his followers: "Did any one of you go near the ant-hill? A great *Rishi* is doing *tapas* there!"

While others said 'No', Sukanya, with worry on her face, said: "Dear Father, I saw two glow-worms in the holes of the ant-hill. I

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tried to get them out with a thorn. They did not come out, but I heard something like a shriek inside. So I ran away!"

"You naughty girl! Why did you do that? The *Rishi's* curse is now upon us all. Come, let us fall at his feet!"

All of them went, and fell at the feet of the *rishi*.

The *rishi* said, "I am already old. I have now lost my eyes. Your child pricked them with a thorn. Who will help me now in my old age?"

The king replied, "O *rishi!* Forgive us. Come to my palace. I shall put all my servants at your service!"

The *rishi* said: "No! Give your daughter in marriage to me! Did she not prick my eyes? I shall live with her here. Only then can I forgive her."

The king felt very sad. Sukanya came forward and declared: "Dear Father, I shall marry the *rishi* and live here serving him. I shall bear the punishment cheerfully!"

The king was thus forced to give away his young and beautiful daughter to the old ugly *rishi*. Sukanya served her husband with devotion and without any complaint. The *rishi* was very happy.

One day the twin-gods Asvins came to the *rishi's ashrama*. They are the heavenly doctors. They were the *rishi's* friends too.

When they saw young Sukanya serving her old husband so devotedly, they were filled with pity for her. The Asvins made Chyavana young and handsome by their divine power.

Chyavana and Sukanya lived very happily ever after.

MEANINGS

1. *shriek*—a shrill outcry
2. *happy-go-lucky*—easy-going; taking things as they come.

EXERCISE

Questions :

1. Who was Sukanya?
2. What happened when she went to the grove with her father?
3. What was the result?
4. How was the old *rishi* cured?
5. Who are the Asvins?

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Savitri

For a long time King Aswapati of Madra had no children. He worshipped Goddess Savitri with great devotion. By the blessings of that Goddess, a female child was at last born to him. He named her Savitri.

Savitri was lovely to look at. She soon learnt all the *Sastras* that high-born girls should know.

When she reached her maidenhood, her father said to her one day: "Child, I cannot think of any husband suitable for a girl like you. So will you select your own husband?"

Savitri drove to the forest in a chariot to get the blessings of the *rishis*. She came to the *ashrama* of Dyumatsena.

Dyumatsena was the King of Salva. His enemies had attacked him and driven him away from his country. So he lived in the forest like a *rishi* with his wife and son, Satyavan.

Dyumatsena had become blind.

Satyavan, his son, was a handsome and noble-minded prince. Savitri fell in love with him. She decided to marry him.

When she returned home, Savitri told her father about her choice of husband.

At that moment *rishi* Narada was with her father.

The *rishi* remarked: "Satyavan is a noble lad; but I am very sorry for him!"

Aswapati enquired with a trace of anxiety, "Why do you say so?"

The *rishi* answered: "The stars say that the boy will die in just one year from now!"

Aswapati felt sad. He asked his daughter: "Savitri, did you hear what the *rishi* said? Now choose another equally good prince as your husband."

Savitri said: "Father, one can love only once, just as one can die only once. I cannot change my decision!"

The *rishi* said: "Since Savitri has made up her mind, allow her to marry Satyavan. God will take care of them."

Accordingly, Savitri married Satyavan. She lived in the forest *ashrama* along with her husband. She pleased everyone in the forest by her pleasing manners and faithful service to the elders.

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But she never forgot what Narada had said. To save her husband from an early death, she prayed to God incessantly. She observed many *vratas*.

At last the fateful day which Narada had mentioned, came. On that day Savitri went along with Satyavan to fetch firewood and fruit for the family.

When they were deep in the forest, Satyavan suddenly fell ill. He could neither walk nor stand up. He lay down on the ground. Savitri placed his head on her lap, and fanned him gently. Her heart beat fast.

Yama, the God of Death, appeared before her. He rode on a buffalo and held a noose in his hand, as we see in pictures of the God.

Savitri asked him in a startled voice: "Who are you, Sir, and why have you come here?"

Yama said: "I have come to take your husband's life away. I am Yama. His life in this world is now over!"

And he began to draw away the life of Satyavan with the noose. Satyavan's body became cold.

Savitri was very learned in the *Sastras*. She did not lose heart.

Savitri kept following Yama, and argued and pleaded with him all the way in such a gentle and persuasive manner that she won the dreaded God wholly over to her side.

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Yama was charmed by her discourse on the *Sastras*, about which she talked continuously.

In this way she extracted one boon after another from Yama—that her father-in-law should get his sight back as well as his kingdom; that her father should have a hundred sons, and so on. At last she asked that she herself should have a hundred sons.

And, Yama without knowing what he did, blessed her, saying, "So be it.'

Savitri immediately turned on him and said, "With that boon, you have also given me back Satyavan's life."

The main purpose was accomplished and she returned to where Satyavan's body lay to see him wake up as if from sleep.

When she went home with Satyavan, everyone gave them an affectionate welcome.

King Dyumatsena could now see his son and daughter-in-law. He had regained his sight. The king also got back his lost kingdom.

In memory of Savitri, married Hindu women observe *Savitri Vrata* in the month of Phalgun. They pray for long life for their husbands.

MEANINGS

1. *manners*—ways of behaviour.
2. *incessantly*—again and again.
3. *to fetch*—to bring.
4. *startled*—taken aback.
5. *persuasive*—convincing
6. *dreaded*—feared.
7. *discourse*—talk; lecture.
8. *regained*—got back.

EXERCISE

Questions :

1. Who was Savitri? How was she born?
2. How did she choose her husband?
3. What did Narada say?
4. What did Savitri do during the year?
5. How did Savitri get back her husband's life from Yama?
6. Why do Hindu women observe the *Savitri Vrata*?

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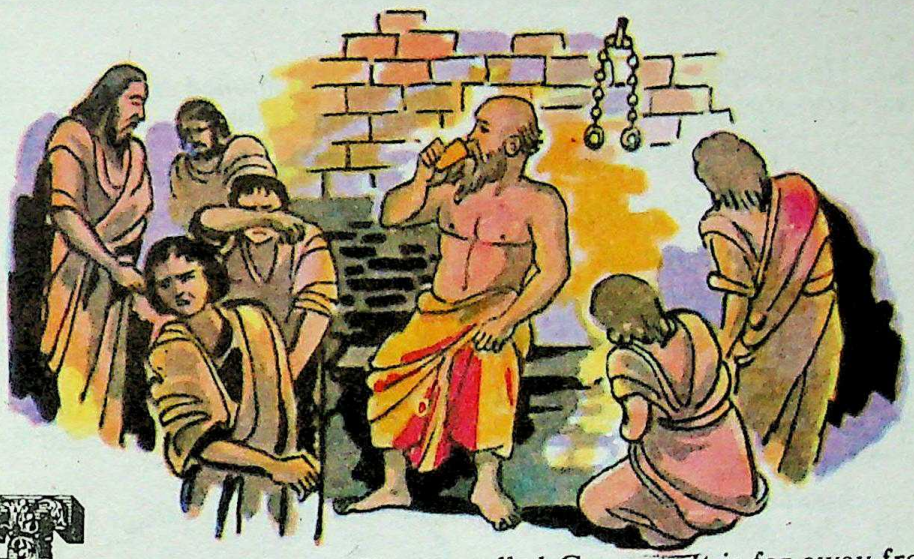
Lesson 8

Socrates



There is a country in Europe called Greece. It is far away from Bharat.

Athens is its capital.

Long, long ago, there lived in that city a man called Socrates.

He was the son of a sculptor. Like his father he also made images in stone. His mother was a kind-hearted woman. She was what we today call a nurse.

Socrates was a very good man. He would say that the only thing he knew was that he knew nothing. But he always tried to find out the truth about things. He encouraged everyone to ask questions, and thus got at the truth.

He taught people to love truth and justice and practise virtue.

Many disciples studied under his guidance.

Socrates had a strong body, but an ugly face. His nose was flat and his lips thick. His eyes were large. His beard was thick. He never put on shoes. He dressed shabbily.

He was on his feet all through the day, and wherever he went he taught whoever was willing to learn. So he had no time to give to his profession. Naturally, he could not earn any money.

His wife was always angry with him. She asked him, "Why don't you do some work, and bring money?" She often scolded him. But Socrates was always gentle and patient with her. There was a leather merchant in Athens. He had a son. That son came to Socrates to learn the Truth. The merchant's father did not like

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it. He complained to the king that Socrates spoiled or as we might say, corrupted young men, since he encouraged them to ask questions.

The king was a bad man. He too did not like Socrates.

Therefore, the king decided that Socrates should die.

All the people of Athens were shocked. Socrates alone was calm and unruffled. He said, "I am not afraid of death."

The king's men put Socrates in jail.

In Athens there was a law. A person sentenced to death could go out of the country instead. But Socrates liked to stay and face death.

Socrates' friends asked him again and again to escape from the jail. But Socrates refused.

On the day fixed for his death, the jail-keeper brought him a cup of poison. He gave it to Socrates, and asked him to drink it. Everyone who was near wept. Even the jail-keeper turned his face aside.

Socrates said: "Why do you people weep? Are you faint-hearted women?"

Socrates drank the poison slowly. It pained him all the more. He then lay down on the cot, and died quietly.

Today we praise him as a great world teacher. Many think of him as one of the wisest men who ever lived.

MEANINGS

1. *shabbily*—not tidily.
2. *corrupted*—spoilt.
3. *unruffled*—undisturbed.

EXERCISE

Questions :

1. Who was Socrates?
2. How was he to look at?
3. Did he dress well and put on shoes?
4. How did he teach?
5. Why did the king order his death?
6. How did he die?
7. What do people think of him today?

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Lesson 9

Confucius

China is a great country. It lies to the east of Bharat.

Many great and learned men have lived there.

Foremost among these was Confucius. He lived in China 2,500 years ago.

Ho was the name of his father, and Chentsai that of his mother.

Confucius was a tall man. He had small eyes. He grew a short beard.

He was very wise and learned.

He wandered all over China. Many kings and nobles sought his advice. He was a minister too.

He was a master of all the six ancient arts.

These arts were ceremonies, music, archery, carriage-driving, reading and mathematics.

A great many people came to study under him.

He taught poetry, history, ceremonies and music to 3,000 pupils.

Of these, several became experts in various skills.

Confucius was gentle by nature, dignified, polite and gay. Even though very learned, he was humble.

Confucius lived up to the age of 72.

When he died, they buried him and built a temple to his memory at the place.

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They have kept his caps, gowns, musical instruments and the

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books he wrote in the temple, and some worship him like a God.

His teachings are collected in a book called the *Analects*.

Confucius always said, "Good sons and good brothers will bring peace to a country."

He taught that every man should have sympathy for every other man, and that it is bad to carry anything to extremes.

Confucius loved humour too. He said about himself: "I forget to eat when I am enthusiastic about something; forget all my worries when I am happy, and forget that old age is coming on."

When you grow older, you will read many of his wise sayings.

EXERCISE

Questions :

1. Where is China?
2. Who was Confucius?
3. How did he look?
4. What are the arts he had mastered?
5. Describe his character.
6. What did people do when he died?
7. What is his book of sayings called?

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Lesson 19

Vikramaditya

Chandra Varma was a learned Brahmin.

The King of Kanyapuri gave him his daughter in marriage.

When the king became old, he made Chandra Varma king in his place.

Chandra Varma had four sons. They were Vallabha, Vikramaditya, Bhatti and Bhartruhari.

After the death of Chandra Varma, Bhartruhari became the king. The old king wanted it so.

Vallabha went to a forest to do *tapas*, because he was saintly.

Bhartruhari was a learned man. He wrote books on right living. They are called *Neeti Shatakas*. Even now people read them. He ruled his country wisely for some time.

After some years, Bhartruhari became discontented with worldly life. So he left the kingdom to Vikramaditya, and like his eldest brother became a *sanyasi*.

Vikramaditya was a very brave prince. He was also learned in all the *Sastras*. He was a master of music, dance and all the arts. When he became king, he made his brother Bhatti his minister. Bhatti was a very learned and wise man. Under their rule, the people were prosperous and happy.

Once Vikramaditya and Bhatti travelled up mountains and through forests.

In the heart of one of the forests, they saw a Kali temple. Ne the temple was a lake. They bathed in the lake, and worshipp Goddess Kali. Prayed Vikramaditya: "Mother, bless me so tl I might conquer more kingdoms."

The Goddess appeared before him and said: "Vikramadit

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build a big city here, and call it by my name. May it become your new capital! You shall conquer many countries."

So Vikramaditya built a city there and called it Ujjain after Kali's name. You have read about Ujjain.

Afterwards Vikramaditya fought many battles, and enlarged his kingdom.

At the court of Vikramaditya were the nine "gems" or great men. Each of them was very learned in one *Sastra* or another. Kalidasa was one of the "gems". He was a great poet. You have read of him too.

Even the Gods became friends of King Vikramaditya.

One day Indra, the King of the Gods, sent for Vikramaditya.

In heaven, there was a dance competition between Urvasi and Rambha. They were two of the best dancers of heaven.

Indra said: "Vikramaditya, you will be the judge of which of the two is the better dancer."

Vikramaditya gave Urvasi and Rambha each a bunch of flowers to hold while dancing.

He told them: "You must keep them erect while dancing."

Vikramaditya had put a scorpion in each of the bunches.

Has a scorpion ever stung you? It can be very painful.

When the ladies danced, the scorpions would sting them. Wouldn't they?

The scorpion stung Rambha viciously. She threw away the bunch, and stopped dancing.

But Urvasi danced so well that she lulled the scorpion into deep sleep in the bouquet. It did not sting her.

Vikramaditya cried in joy: "Well done, Urvasi! You are without question the better dancer."

Vikramaditya ruled long. He made a name for himself as a good and wise ruler.

MEANINGS

1. *discontented*—not satisfied.
2. *prosperous*—wealthy.
3. *viciously*—causing a lot of pain.
4. *lulled*—gently make one to sleep.
5. *bouquet*—bunch of flowers.

EXERCISE

Questions :

1. Who was Chandra Varma?
2. Who were his sons?
3. What do you know of Bhartruhari?
4. How did Ujjain come into being?

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Prayag

Have you ever been to Allahabad? It is a famous city in the north of India. A mile and a half from Allahabad is the holy *kshetra* called Prayag.

From very ancient times, people from all over the country have gone on pilgrimage to Prayag.

Three holy rivers, the Ganga, the Yamuna and the Saraswati flowing from the Himalayas, meet here. We call it the *Triveni Sangam*.

All *Sangams* or points where rivers meet are holy, but this *Sangam* is more holy than others.

God Brahma did a great *yaga* here. That is why it has come to be called Pra-yaga. 'Pra' stands for Prajapati, another name for Brahma.

At Prayag the waters of the Ganga appear white, and those of the Yamuna blue. You can clearly see the line of demarcation.

Poet Kalidasa describes this junction as a mixing of pearls and emeralds.

The river Saraswati, however, joins the other two from below the earth. It is not seen on the surface.

God Vishnu is worshipped in this *kshetra* as Bindu Madhava.

Rishi Bharadwaja had his *ashrama* here. Sri Rama came to his *ashrama* while living in the forest.

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Pious men who go to this *kshetra* bathe at the *Sangam*.

Holy Brahmins of the *kshetra* pitch their tents on the sand, or stay mid-stream on boats, and help pilgrims in their worship.

People offer *sraddha* to their ancestors, and give away gifts of money.

Women give auspicious things like small mirrors, packets of *kumkum*, bangles and coloured clothes to other women in the belief that it brings luck. This pleases Mother Ganga.

People bathe in this *Sangam* mostly on new and full moon days, all days of the month of Magha, Makara-Sankranti, Ratha-Saptami, and other holy days.

There are a number of small shrines and old *ashramas* in and around Prayag. People offer worship there.

Once in twelve years the *Kumbha-Mela* is held here in the month of Kumbha. Millions of ordinary people and a large number of *sadhus* from all over India come here at this time, and take a dip in the holy waters.

Pilgrims who go to Kasi also visit Prayag.

Emperor Akbar built a modern city near Prayag, and gave it the name Allahabad. It means the City of God.

Jawaharlal Nehru was born in the city of Allahabad. Here you can see the Swaraj Bhavan. His family lived there once.

MEANINGS

1. *demarcation*—separation.
2. *auspicious*—holy.

EXERCISE

Questions :

1. Where is Prayag?
2. Why is it called *Triveni Sangam*?
3. How does Kalidasa describe this *Sangam*?
4. How do people worship God there?
5. What is *Kumbha-Mela* and when is it held?

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Lesson 12

Godavari

There is a village called Triyambak near Nasik.

Not far from that village there is a hill.

Rishi Gautama lived on that hill. It is called Brahmagiri. Long ago he lived there with his wife Ahalya.

The *rishi* kept his stock of rice in a granary.

One day a cow came there and ate up all the rice. The *rishi* saw this. He tried to drive the cow away with *darbha* grass, that can hurt no one. But when Gautama used the *darbha* grass, the cow fell down dead.

The *rishi* was very unhappy. He wanted to atone for the sin of killing a cow.

He went away from his *ashrama* and did *tapas* to bring the Ganga waters down there.

His *tapas* pleased God Siva.

Siva, as you know, carries the river Ganga in his matted hair or *jata*.

Siva gave him a part of his *jata* along with the Ganga.

Gautama took the *jata* and sprinkled the water from the Ganga on the cow. The cow came back to life. It pardoned Gautama, and went its way.

That Ganga water became the river Godavari.

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Because it gave life to a cow, the river got the name Godavari. 'Go' means cow and 'da' means giving.

Because Gautama was instrumental in bringing it, the river is also called Gautami.

At Triyambak there is the famous temple of Triyambakeshwar. He is in the form of a Siva-Linga.

The river Godavari is seen trickling from under the Siva-Linga.

Godavari is one of the great, holy rivers of India.

The other holy rivers are Ganga, Yamuna, Saraswati, Narmada, Sindhu and Kaveri. Pious people recite the names of these rivers early in the morning while bathing.

The river Godavari is nearly a thousand miles long. Rising from the hill near Triyambak, it flows across the country, and falls into the sea in the east.

There are many holy places on the banks of the Godavari. The first is Triyambak.

Panchavati near Nasik is another sacred place, which is also famous. Sri Rama lived there along with Sita and Lakshmana for many days during his stay in the forest.

Once in twelve years a big *mela* is held in Nasik. Thousands of people bathe in the Godavari at the time.

Bhadrachala is another holy place on the banks of the Godavari. Sri Rama crossed the Godavari here. There is near the spot a famous temple of Rama.

People who bathe in the Godavari are blessed with children and happiness.

MEANINGS: 1. *instrumental*—be the cause of

EXERCISE: 1. Where did *Rishi* Gautama live?
2. What happened when a cow ate the rice in his granary?
3. Why did he do *tapas*?
4. What did Siva give him?
5. What turned into Godavari?
6. Why is the Godavari so called?
7. What are the other names for the Godavari?

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Lesson 13

Kaveri

Coorg is a small district in Karnataka State. It gets plenty of rainfall. It is rich in forests.

There is a small hill called Brahmagiri in Coorg. The river Kaveri starts in that hill as a small pool at a place called Talakaveri. For some distance after rising, it flows underground. It shows up again lower down on the hill.

After passing through some more districts of Karnataka the Kaveri flows through Tamil Nadu and finally falls into the sea.

The Kaveri is a holy river. In the month of Tula or October-November, people from all parts of the country come to bathe in the river.

Long ago a *rishi* by name Kavera lived in Brahmagiri. God Brahma gave him a daughter. Because she was brought up

by Kavera, she was called Kaveri.

Kaveri was a very beautiful girl. One day *Rishi* Agastya passed through Brahmagiri. He saw Kaveri. He liked her. So he wanted to marry her. He asked *Rishi* Kavera's permission to marry his daughter. The *rishi* gave his consent.

Kaveri, however, made one condition. She said to Agastya: "I shall marry you, but you should never leave me alone. If you do, I shall at once turn into a river." Agastya agreed to the condition. He then married her. The two lived a happy life.

One night the Gods sent out Agastya on some urgent work. He

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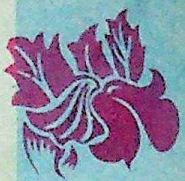

left when Kaveri was asleep. Kaveri happened to wake up only to find that she was alone. So at once she became a river, and went underground. Agastya came back soon. But Kaveri was not there. He realized what had happened. From that day Kaveri has been living as a river. He mourned his loss but could not recover his wife.

The people of Coorg worship the river Kaveri as a Goddess. Each house has a picture. In that picture Goddess Kaveri is seen blessing a devotee. In the evening people say their prayers in front of the picture.

Have you seen a woman of Coorg? She wears her sari in a special way. There is a reason for it.

On the day Kaveri became a river, the people of Coorg went to receive her. They met her on the way to the hill. But the force with which the waters rolled was very great. The women's saris began to drag in the current. To keep the saris in place, they tied them in a special way, which is even to this day followed.

Kaveri told them: "You should wear your saris in the same manner from now on. Then you will remember me. I bless you."

Kaveri became their family Goddess. They have been wearing their saris in that special style ever since.

The river Kaveri falls from a height of 300 ft. near Sivasamudram in Karnataka State. You must go and see the place one day. It is worth seeing.

They generate electricity with the help of the water falls.

The Kaveri is an important river. The land in Tanjavoor district in Tamil Nadu grows paddy with waters drawn from the Kaveri.

The Kaveri is the Ganga of the South. She too has a *Sangam*. People have a holy bath in it.

EXERCISE

Questions :

1. Where is Brahmagiri?
2. Who was Kaveri?
3. Who married her? Under what condition?
4. Why did Kaveri become a river?
5. Why do the women of Coorg wear their saris in a special style?

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Lesson 14

Ayodhya

Like the seven holy rivers, there are also the seven sacred cities of India. They are Ayodhya, Mathura, Haridwar, Kasi, Kanchi, Ujjain and Dwaraka. You have read about some of them. You will now learn about Ayodhya.

Today Ayodhya is a small town near Fyzabad in northern India. In ancient times, it was a great city. It was the capital of Kosala-desa. Many great kings ruled in this part of the country.

Manu was its first king. It was he who built this city.

The word Ayodhya means invincible—no one can fight against the city and win.

Ikshvaku, Mandhata, Harischandra, Dasaratha and Sri Rama were some of its rulers.

The great *Ramayana* contains a vivid description of the Ayodhya of those times.

There were many palaces and other big buildings in Ayodhya. The people were prosperous. No one spoke ill of his fellowmen. All lived long lives.

Near Ayodhya runs the river Sarayu.

Since Rama was born in Ayodhya, it has become a holy city for us.

It is holy for the Buddhists and Jains too. The Buddha, and Adinatha, the Jain saint, also lived here.

In Ayodhya, there are many temples. The Kanaka Bhavan is

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one of the more famous of the temples. Here the idols of Rama and Sita are seen on a golden throne. There is a Hanuman temple too. The idol of Hanuman there is very big. A number of monkeys live near the temple.

In Ayodhya there is a place called Lakad Mandi. King Dasaratha did his *yaga* there for the birth of a child.

The city is in the shape of a fish. There are many sacred *tirthas* in it. The Swargadwar and the Rama Ghat are the more important ones. People visit them. There are Siva temples also.

Tulsidas was a great poet. He wrote the story of Rama in Hindi. It is called *Ramacharita Manasa*. Tulsidas went to Ayodhya to write this story. There God Rama appeared to him. When you are older, you will enjoy reading the *Manasa*.

MEANINGS

1. *invincible*—that which cannot be conquered.
2. *vivid*—clear like a picture.

EXERCISE

Questions :

1. Where is Ayodhya?
2. Who were the kings that ruled there?
3. What river runs near Ayodhya?
4. Why is Ayodhya holy?
5. Which are the seven most holy cities of India
6. Who is Tulsidas, and what did he write?

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Lesson 15

Somanath

Daksha was God Brahma's son. He had many sons and daughters. He gave twenty-seven daughters to the Moon-God in marriage. These girls were named after the twenty-seven *nakshatras*. You know these *nakshatras*, of course, don't you?

Now the Moon-God did not love all his wives equally. One of the wives was Rohini. Her the Moon-God loved more than the others. The other wives did not relish this. They complained to their father, Daksha.

Daksha sent for the Moon-God and rebuked him. "Dear son-in-law, your wives are my daughters—all of them. I don't want you to love any one more than the others. It is not a good thing to make any woman sad."

The Moon-God promised that he would try to love all equally. However, he continued to love Rohini more than the others.

So Daksha became angry, and cursed the Moon-God that he should suffer from *kshaya*.

Kshaya is a dangerous disease. They call it T.B. now. One who suffers from it coughs incessantly. He becomes thin and weak. Accordingly the Moon-God lost his lustre.

So he went to Daksha for advice. "I am sorry for my sin. What should I do to get cured?" asked the Moon-God.

Daksha suggested that he should go to *Prabhasa Kshetra* in Saurashtra, and worship God Somanatha.

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The Moon-God and Rohini went to Prabhasa, and worshipped Somanatha for several years. Somanatha was pleased and blessed the Moon-God: "For one fortnight you shall grow in brightness and in the next, you will reduce. That will be your fate from now on."

That is how we have the bright and dark phases of the moon.

Since the moon recovered its brightness here, the *kshetra* is called Prabhasa. 'Bhasa' means light.

God Brahma then dug into the earth at Somanath, and showed to the Moon-God Lord Somanatha. He was a small Siva-Linga but he glowed like a thousand suns.

Brahma helped the Moon-God to build a big temple for Lord Somanatha at the same place.

Somanatha is a *Swayambhu-linga*, a self-born *linga*. It is not man-made. The place is one of the twelve famous Siva shrines of India.

Many *rishis* and *siddhas* did *tapas* at Prabhasa, and got miraculous powers.

People from all parts of the country go on pilgrimage to this *kshetra*. The beautiful temple of Somanatha faces the sea.

MEANINGS

1. *relish*—to like.
2. *rebuked*—scolded.
3. *lustre*—glow.
4. *phases*—aspects.
5. *miraculous*—wonderful; uncommon.

EXERCISE

Questions :

1. Who was Daksha?
2. Whom did the Moon-God marry?
3. What are the names of the *Nakshatras?*
4. Whom did the Moon-God love most?
5. How did Daksha warn the Moon-God?
6. What happened to the Moon-God?
7. How did the Moon-God get his lustre and life back?
8. Where is Prabhasa? What is it famous for?

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Lesson 16

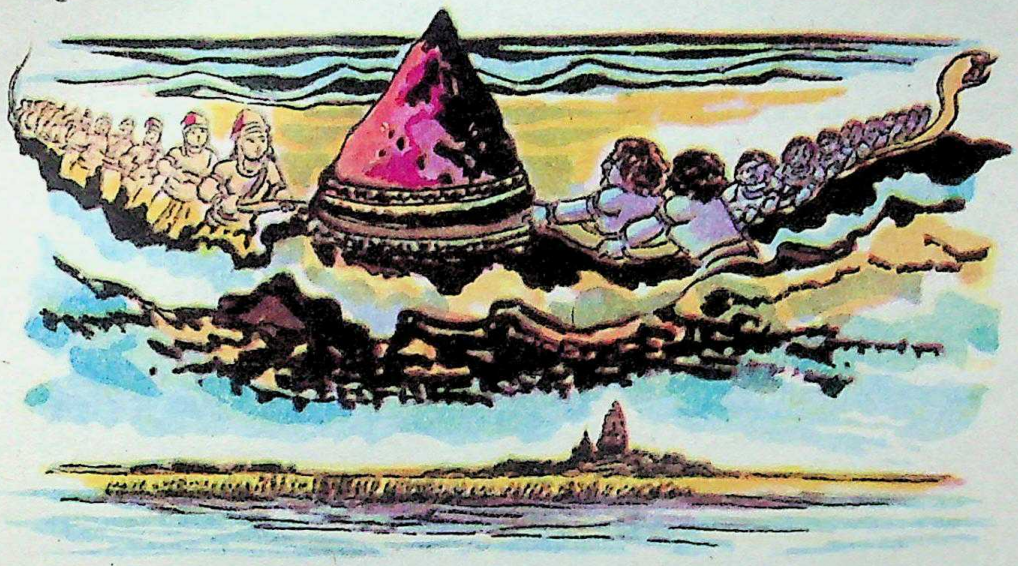
The Kumbha Mela

Long before the world was born, there was a sea full of milk. It was called *Kshira Sagara.*

That sea contained *amrita.* By drinking *amrita* one remained always young.

The Devas wanted to have the *amrita* all for themselves. The Asuras too wanted to drink the *amrita.*

The Devas and Asuras were born enemies. They always fought one another. In the same way, the Devas and Asuras started churning the sea of milk to get *amrita.*



For churning, you need a churning-rod and also a rope.

The Meru mountain became the churning-rod.

Vasuki was the King of snakes. He was very strong, and was also long enough to be used as a rope.

Now that they found a rod and a rope, the Devas and Asuras started to churn the sea of milk.

The Asuras held the head of Vasuki. The Devas held the tail end. And so they churned the sea.

Many rare and precious things came out of the churning.

At last the *amrita* also came. The angel Dhanvantari brought it in a *kumbha.* '*Kumbha*' in Sanskrit means pot.

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He gave the pot to Jayanta.

Jayanta was the Prince of the Gods. As soon as he got it he ran away with the pot of *amrita*.

The Asuras chased him.

For twelve days, Jayanta ran here and there.

On the way, however, a part of the *amrita* from the pot spilled over at four places.

One of these places was Prayag.

Once in twelve years that event is celebrated in Prayag in the month of Kumbha. It is called the Kumbha Mela.

'Kumbha', as you know, means pot and 'Mela' means festival.

This Mela celebrates the falling of *amrita* over Prayag.

Millions of people from all over India come to Prayag for the Mela. Some *Sadhus* also come from the Himalayas. All bathe in the *Triveni Sangam*. It was here that the *amrita* was spilt.

The Kumbha Mela is a very old and a very holy festival.

Meeting holy people and bathing together in holy waters on holy occasions are all part of our way of life.

EXERCISE

Questions :

1. What is *amrita?*
2. How did the Devas and Asuras churn it?
3. Who brought the *amrita*? What happened to it?
4. What is the Kumbha Mela, and where is it held?
5. How is the Kumbha Mela celebrated?

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Uposatha

You have read about Gautama, the Buddha.

The followers of the Buddha are known as the Buddhists.

The Uposatha is a Buddhist festival. It is a day of fast. It comes round every month. Hindus fast on Ekadasi or the eleventh lunar day.

Among the Buddhists, there are monks. They wear yellow robes. You might have seen some of these monks.

These monks fast, and also read and preach the teachings of the Buddha and meditate on them on these Uposatha days.

Other pious Buddhists who are not monks also fast on these days.

In olden times, the Buddhists did no trade or business on this day. Villagers did not go fishing or hunting, and even schools were closed on such a day.

Ordinary people observe this day by wearing clean clothes and doing acts of kindness because it is a holy day. They remember the Buddha's teachings. These teachings are:

Do not kill.
Do not take what is not yours.
Do not tell lies.
Do not drink.
Do not touch women.
Do not eat too much at night.
Do not use garlands and scents.
Do not sleep on a mat put on the ground.

If you have done a wrong, you must confess it to your elders on this day. The monks or the elders will pardon you.

This is a very good practice and all of us can observe it.

MEANINGS

1. *meditate*—to think on something.

EXERCISE

Questions :

1. What is a Uposatha day?
2. How do monks observe it?
3. How do ordinary people observe it?
4. What does the Buddha want us to do on the day?
5. Would you also like to observe it?

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Lesson 18

Mauna Ekadasi

Long ago, there lived a merchant named Sur. He was a Jain.

His *guru* said to him one day: "Sur, you must do *Mauna-vrata* for one day on the 11th day of the bright half of Margashirsh every year."

On *Mauna-vrata* day we should not speak at all, but keep complete silence all through the day and night. It will give peace to the mind and strength to the body.

Sur observed this *Vrata* for eleven years.

He became a very rich merchant in his subsequent birth. He was called Suvrat in this, his next life. He had many children. The king of his country honoured him.

One day a *Sadhu* came to Suvrat and told him about *Mauna Ekadasi*.

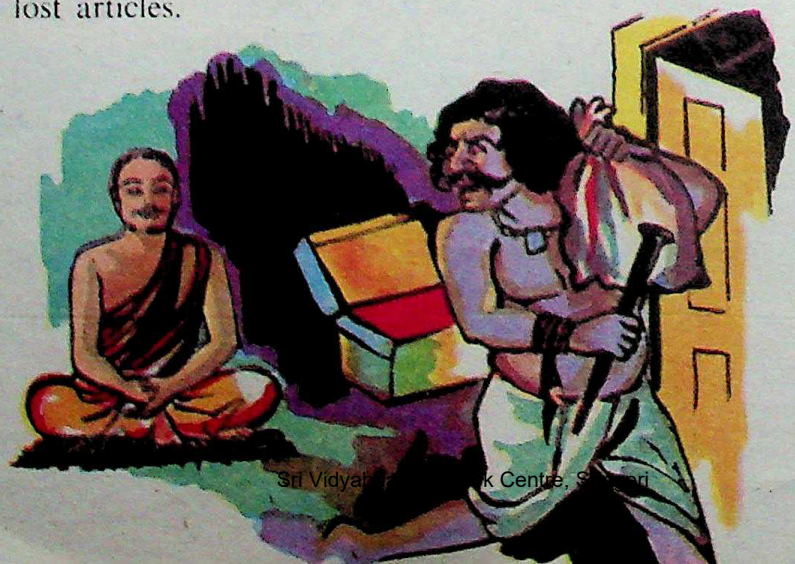
Suvrat at once remembered his past life. He also remembered his *Mauna-vrata*. So he continued the *Mauna-Ekadasi-vrata* in his present life as well.

One *Mauna-Ekadasi* day, Suvrat was observing the *Vrata* as usual.

At night a thief broke into his house and stole many valuables.

Yet Suvrat did not object nor call for help. He did not want to break the *Vrata*.

However, the police caught the thief later, and Suvrat got back the lost articles.



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People dragged the thief to the king. The king wanted to punish the thief. But Suvrat said to the king: "Lord, release the thief!"

The king released the thief as Suvrat requested. Later on the thief was reformed, and became a good man.

Once a fire broke out in the city. Everybody ran away in fright, but Suvrat did not. To everyone's surprise the fire did not harm him at all.

When Suvrat died, he went to heaven, because he had observed the *Mauna-Ekadasi-vrata* very scrupulously.

Neminath is a great Saint in Jainism. Long ago he asked all Jains to observe this *Vrata*.

Lord Mahavira too observed this *Vrata*.

Mauna-Ekadasi is a sacred day. A hundred and fifty holy days fall on this one single day.

On this day, therefore, Jains observe complete silence.

MEANINGS

1. *subsequent*- -next.
2. *valuables*—costly things like jewels, etc.
3. *scrupulously*—conscientiously.

EXERCISE

Questions :

1. What is meant by *Mauna-vrata?* When is it observed? How does it help you?
2. How did it help Sur?
3. Who was Suvrat in his past life? Why did the king honour him?
4. What did Suvrat do when a thief broke into his house?
5. Why is *Mauna-Ekadasi* holy?

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Lesson 19

The Pious Cat

There was an old tree in a forest which had a hole in its trunk. In that hole lived a sparrow.

Everyday, the sparrow went out in the morning to eat the grain from the fields around and returned to the tree in the evening.

Once it went away as usual but did not return to the tree for several days.

In the meantime a hare came, and seeing the sparrow's hole empty, made its home there.

After some days, however, the sparrow returned to the tree.

The sparrow had become quite fat. It had eaten a lot of new grain from the field.

Seeing the hare in its hole, the sparrow said to the hare: "This is my house. You have occupied it in my absence. Since I have come back, you should now leave."

The hare said: "In wells, lakes and temples, there is no such thing as permanent living-place for anyone. Once a person leaves, any one else can occupy his place. If you don't believe me you may ask anyone else."

The sparrow suggested, "Let us go to a wise man and ask him if it is so." The hare agreed.

A cat was listening to their talk all the time. So, it put on the dress of a pious person. It wore the sacred ash, and beads on its body, and sat on a grass mat across their path. When it saw them coming, it closed its eyes, and started telling the beads.

The hare and the sparrow saw the pious cat.

Said the hare, "Why shouldn't we ask this cat? He seems to be a learned person."

The sparrow cautioned, "Is he not our common enemy?"

The cat, on hearing this, opened his eyes and said: "I have given up my evil nature. I will not kill anybody. I do not eat meat. I speak only the truth. I want to find God."

Hearing these words, the hare and the sparrow were impressed. But they sat at some distance from him and told him about the case.

The cat said: "My dear friends, I am a little deaf. If I do not hear what you say properly, I may give a wrong judgment. Then I shall have to go to hell. Please therefore come nearer and state

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your case more clearly. I promise I shall do no harm."

The hare and the sparrow shed their suspicion and went and sat near the cat. At once the cat pounced upon them, and caught one with his mouth and the other with his sharp paws and ate them up.

MEANINGS

1. *telling the beads*—repeating silently some holy name and counting the number of repetitions on the beads.
2. *shed*—gave up.

EXERCISE

Questions :

1. Where did the sparrow live?
2. Why was it missing for several days?
3. What did the sparrow see after its return?
4. What did it ask the hare to do?
5. What was the hare's reply?
6. How did they decide to settle their quarrel?
7. Whom did they see on their way?
8. How did the cat dupe them?
9. What do you learn from this story?

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Lesson 20

The Snake and the Farmer

There was once a farmer. He had a small piece of land. He grew paddy on it. There came a year when no rain fell and the crops failed. The farmer did not know what to do. He was desperate.

He sat down in his field and began to think: "Perhaps the gods are angry with me. That is why no rains came."

When he rose, he saw in a corner of that field a big black snake coming out of its pit. The snake had a large hood.

The farmer thought: "Ah! This must be the God of the field. I have never worshipped Him. That must be the reason for the

failure of the crops. I must now worship Him."

He went home and brought some milk. The snake had by then crept back into the pit. So the farmer poured some milk into the pit. After praying before the snake-pit for some time, he left the place.

On the following morning he again took some milk. When, however, he went near the pit, he saw a large gold coin lying at the mouth of the pit!

The farmer thought: "The field-God must have been pleased with my worship. He has given me this gold coin to help me out of my poverty!"

He took it and, after pouring milk into the pit, returned to his house.

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The following morning he found yet another gold coin in the same place. Thus everyday he offered the snake some milk and got a gold coin the following day.

One day he had to go to another village on some urgent work. So he called his son and said: "Son, do not forget to worship our field-God at the pit with milk everyday, when I am away." The son said, "All right, father. I won't forget."

After the farmer had gone, his son took the milk to the field. He too found a golden coin.

At first the boy thought that it was by luck that he got the coin. But on the second day too there was a gold coin waiting for him.

Then he thought: "Surely, there must be a lot of gold coins in the pit. Let me dig them out and take them away all together."

He brought a crow-bar and started digging.

Enraged at the destruction of its home, the big snake came out hissing fiercely, and bit the boy. The boy died on the spot.

The snake left the pit and went away somewhere else, thinking the people would kill it.

When the farmer returned, and saw the dead body of his son, his heart broke.

He cried out, "Why did I not tell my son about the snake? Alas! Why did he disturb the field-God?"

MEANINGS

1. *desperate*—beyond hope.
2. *crow-bar*—a large iron-bar bent at the end.

EXERCISE

Questions :

1. What did the farmer see one day in his field? What did he take it for?
2. How did the farmer worship the snake and what did he get?
3. What did the farmer tell his son before he went to another village?
4. Why did the farmer's son disturb the snake, and what was the result?

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Lesson 21

The Hare and the Elephant

Once there was an elephant king, who lived in a forest.

There was no rain for a long time in the forest and so the water in all the pools dried up.

The other elephants went and asked their king: "Oh King! There is not a drop of water anywhere near. Where shall we find water for drinking or bathing?"

The elephant king thought for a moment, and said: "I know of a big lake not far from here. Water never dries up there. Let us all go to that lake." So all the elephants went to the place where they could find water.

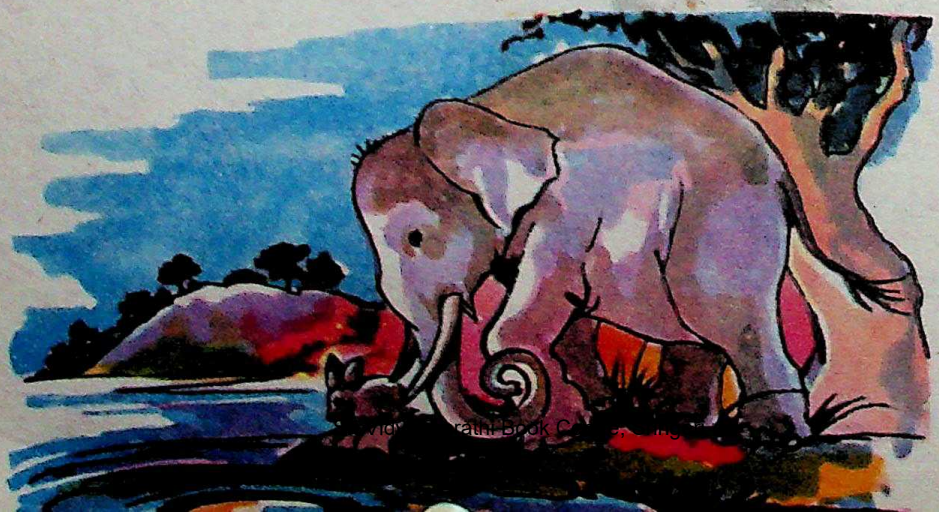
There was plenty of water in the lake. The elephants joyfully entered the lake and played about in the water. They decided to stay near that lake.

On the shores of that lake lived many hares. The hares were upset because some of them were trampled under foot and killed by these elephants.

They got together one day to take counsel. One hare said: "Those elephants are a danger to us. Some of our brethren have already died. We cannot fight the elephants. They are too strong. How can we stop them from killing any more of us?"

An old hare observed: "True. They are big and strong. We cannot fight them. But if we can frighten them, they will run away! Can any one find a way of scaring the big brutes?"

One clever hare suggested, "In the moon there is a black patch. Everyone says that it is the King of hares. The elephants also think



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so. So I shall tell the elephants that I am a messenger sent by our king in the moon and thus try to frighten them!"

"That is a good idea," said all the other hares.

The next day the clever one went to the elephant king.

From a safe distance, it called out: "O Elephant King!"

"What do you want?", asked the elephant king.

"I am a messenger sent by the King of hares. I come from the moon!"

"Oh! Is that so? What can I do for you?"

"Our King wants you to go away from this lake, because you elephants kill the hares by stepping on them when you come here for drinking water!"

"I see!" said the elephant king. "Can I see your Master or the Moon-God?"

"O yes; the Moon-God is right now staying below the lake water. You can see Him if you like, but if you disturb Him, he will become angry!"

The hare led the elephant king to the waters of the lake. There the full-moon shone brightly in the water.

Seeing it the elephant king said, "Namaste!" to the Moon-God in the water. He was satisfied that the Moon-God had sent a messenger.

"We shall go away from here," the elephant king assured the hare. The elephant king then called all his followers together and left the place.

MEANING

1. *trampled*—to tread roughly under foot.

EXERCISE

Questions :

1. Why did the elephants go to a second lake?
2. What happened there?
3. How did the hares overcome the danger?
4. What do you learn from this story?

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Lesson 22

Shivaji

You have all heard of Shivaji the Great. He lived three hundred years ago in Maharashtra. He was born in Shivner in Sahyadri hills.

His father was Shahaji Bhosale and his mother, Jijabai. Bhavani was their family Goddess.

Shivaji was a great warrior. He fought many battles.

One night, Shahaji had a dream. In that dream a *sanyasi* gave him a mango and said: "You and your wife should eat it. You will have a son who will become very great."

When Shahaji awoke, there was a real mango on his hand. He thought it was God Siva himself who had come to him in his dream. He ate part of the mango and gave the rest to Jijabai.

Soon afterwards a son was born to them. Shahaji named him Shivaji, because he believed he was given by God Siva.

Shahaji was always away from home, fighting wars.

So it was Jijabai who brought her son up. She taught him at home. She read to him stories of Rama, Arjuna, Krishna and other heroes of the epics.

Shivaji married Saibai while he was very young.

Shivaji had a great ambition to set up his own kingdom.

Shivaji's teacher Dadaji taught him the art of war.

Before he was eighteen years old, Shivaji became a fearless and accomplished soldier. He collected many followers. He captured

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many hill forts belonging to the Sultan of Bijapur and the Mughal Emperor.

The Bijapur Sultan became scared by the conquests of Shivaji. So he thought of a plan to kill Shivaji or capture him alive. He entrusted this job to Afzal Khan, one of his brave generals.

Afzal Khan accordingly sent word to Shivaji to meet him. They decided to meet at the foot of Pratapgad.

Shivaji, knowing the cunning nature of his enemy, had prepared himself for any eventuality.

When the two were alone, Afzal Khan tried to crush Shivaji in a strong embrace. Shivaji, who had come prepared, could not be crushed as he had put on a steel coat under his usual robe. However, Shivaji seized this opportunity and tore the belly of Afzal Khan with iron claws which he had concealed under his fingers. Afzal Khan fell dead.

Once the Mughal Emperor invited Shivaji to Agra. Shivaji went. But there he was put in prison. Shivaji used a stratagem to escape. He hid in a sweet-meat basket. When the servants carried it out, he too got out of the prison.

After coming out, he dressed himself like a *sanyasi*, and safely returned to Poona.

Later Shivaji was crowned king at Raigad.

Shivaji was a pious man. He loved and honoured his *guru*, Samarth Ramdas.

Once *Guru* Ramdas fell ill. He said to Shivaji, "Will you bring some tiger's milk? It will cure my illness."

Without a moment's hesitation, Shivaji went to the forest. He saw some tiger cubs. He took one of the cubs in his hand and waited for its mother.

The tigress saw Shivaji with her young one in his hand. She became furious and at once sprang on him, and scratched him all over. But Shivaji was without fear. He restrained the tigress, and then appealed to her, "O tiger! I do not want to take away your cubs. I only want a little milk from you for my *Guru* Ramdas who is ill."

At once the tigress became quiet. She allowed him to milk her. After collecting the milk, Shivaji took it to his *Guru*. The *Guru* drank part of it, and was cured. He gave the rest to Shivaji, and when he drank it, all scratches disappeared.

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Guru Ramdas taught Shivaji to greet all human beings with the salutation "Ram Ram". This is how in Maharashtra they greet one another to this day. You will read more about Shivaji's greatness in books of history.

MEANINGS

1. *eventuality*—any sudden and unexpected happening.
2. *stratagem*—trick.

EXERCISE

Questions :

1. Who were Shivaji's parents?
2. How was he born?
3. Who wanted to catch Shivaji?
4. How did Shivaji kill Afzal Khan?
5. How did he escape from the Agra prison?
6. Who was Shivaji's *Guru?*
7. How did he bring tiger's milk for his *Guru?*
8. How did the greeting "Ram Ram" originate?

Bhavan's Faith

Let me once more set forth the faith for which the Bhavan stands; it stands for the re-integration of Indian culture. In a world falling to pieces under the impact of an amoral technological avalanche, it tries to hold fast to the fundamental values for which our culture stands—RITA, SATYA, YAGNA and TAPAS. Faith in God Who in-forms the Cosmic Order; Truth which is accord between mind, word and deed; Dedication which offers all movements of life as an offering to God. Sublimation which purifies the body and mind and transmutes instincts, passions and emotions into things of beauty. This, regardless of forms and doctrines, is Dharma, the three-fold aspects of which are SATYAM, SHIVAM, SUNDARAM Truth, Love and Beauty.

For these values, our forefathers lived and died. So did Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa, Swami Dayananda, Swami Vivekananda, Gandhiji and Sri Aurobindo, among the moderns. These values are embedded in our national outlook. We command the respect of the world because of them. We can look forward to the future with confidence only because they have the vitality which can give the power to vindicate their validity even in this fear-and-avarice-ridden age of ours.

K. M. Munshi

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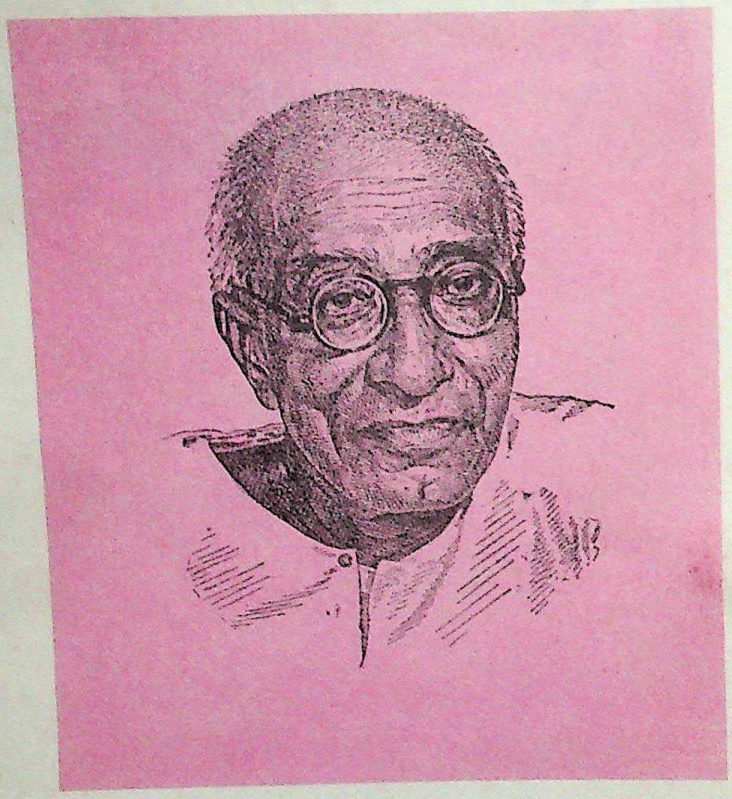

Character is formed in childhood. We have, therefore, to be very careful with our children at that stage.

C. Rajagopalachari

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